

## ...sant satjug aa gayo.

By Anjan Saggu

ਔਰੈ ਰੀਤ, ਔਰੈ ਮੀਤ, ਔਰੈ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ, ਪ੍ਰੀਤ,  
ਖਾਨ ਪਹਿਰਾਨ ਗਯਾਨ, ਮਾਨ, ਔਰੈ ਜਨ ਕੈ ।  
ਡਾਰੇ ਦਸਤਾਰੇ, ਸਾਢੇ ਭਾਰੇ ਹੈਂ ਸੰਭਾਰੇ,  
ਕਛੈ ਤਜ ਗਏ, ਧੋਤੀ ਸੁਥੂ ਸੰਗ ਤਨ ਕੈ ।  
ਧਾਰੇ ਹੈਂ ਗਰਾਰੇ, ਤੰਬੇ, ਤਹਮਤ ਅਧਿਕ ਲੰਬੇ  
ਜਿਨੈ ਦੇਖ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਗਊ ਕੰਬੈ, ਤੁਰਕ ਗਨ ਕੈ ।  
ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਕੀ ਸੁ ਕੀ ਅਪਰ ਦੇਸ ਦੀ,  
ਅਸਿੱਖੀ ਭਰੀ ਪੇਸ਼ਗੀ ਛਿਨਾਰ ਬਨ ਠਨ ਕੈ ।  
-ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ।

The words of Giani Gian Singh, a prominent Sikh scholar, unmistakably portray the state of sikhi of Dasam Patshah ji by the mid nineteenth century. Giani ji says that the Khalsa renounced the principles & ideals as established by Dasam Patshah ji. Its customs & traditions, daily-routines etc did not remain in tune with sikhi values & morals, rather it became those of anti-sikhs, unfaithfuls.

When Sikh panth was going further down this rough patch, Satguru Ram Singh Ji appeared on the horizon. Satguru Ji considered the moral code of Dasam Patshah Ji as supreme code of conduct. However it was obligatory to rectify the shortcomings crept in due to passage of time. Along with, the need of the hour was to further add such ideals by following those layman learns an honest way of living, resulting in the betterment and furtherance of Sikhi.

For this objective Visakhi 1914 Bikrami (12 April 1857) was planned. Satguru Ram Singh Ji rejuvenated the fade out Sikhi of Dasam Patshah Ji by administering Amrit to five Sikh followers. To attain the objective of betterment and furtherance of Sikhi, Satguru Ji gave a new direction in social, political and religious domains. For singing hymns in high pitch, this new panth was called Kuka. As the Naam, which can only be obtained from a Guru, is the nucleus of this panth that is why it is also called Namdhari.

The meaning of *Dharam* is not limited to only religion rather it includes values and beliefs and extends to duty. If the objective is to change someone, change his/ her values and beliefs. That's why foreign rulers have tried their best to change the religious ideology of natives. A successful change in religious ideology of natives would result in changed values and beliefs in commensuration with that of rulers' eventually extending the life of ruling class. So the need of the hour was to stand firm on our indigenous religious values and beliefs, to become hand in glove with our culture, philosophy and traditions. Those who have confidence in their religious values and beliefs can stand for their community and motherland.

Satguru Ram Singh Ji made formal initiation by administering Amrit compulsory to all who wants to be Namdhari. All were ordered to keep 5-K's *Kes, Kangha, Kara, Kachhehra and Kirpan*. As carrying long *Kirpan* was prohibited by the government, He ordered followers to carry the symbolic one, which is tied to the *Kangha*. He ordered followers to get up early in the morning well before dawn, have a head to toe bath, meditate on the Name of God, read scripture, recite name even while doing day-to-day work. He forbade praying graves, *peer, fakir* etc. The reading and ceremonial closing of scriptures viz. Sri Adi Granth Sahib and Sri Dasam Granth Sahib was vital.

Beside religious orders, honest and truthful living was also mandated. Followers were instructed to repay the debts at all costs. He, like predecessors, emphasised to have only vegetarian diet. The cleanliness and purity had to be kept while cooking too. To maintain hygiene and cleanliness, directives for self-cooking were issued besides keeping own *Garwa*. Consumption of alcohol, opium, other intoxicants etc was strictly prohibited. The white traditional attire of *churidar kurta-pyjama* accompanied by 5 K's and a white rosary (Mala) to meditate was made the attire of a Namdhari Sikh.

Followers were instructed to get together in the mornings to recite Gurbani viz Asa di Var, and in the evenings to perform *Katha-kirtan*. Preachers were instructed to narrate the history as well as explain the meanings of Gurbani. He designated 22 Suba, who could lead by example, to propagate further the cause of Sikhism. He toured many a villages and towns to preach and guide the people. He would preach to respect and read

the scripture and meditate on Naam. He would ask people to get the scripture from forgotten corners of their household. To lead by example He would clean the dust off the scripture with his own turban. To make the scripture more readily available, He got Sri Adi Granth Sahib printed from the press of Diwan Buta Singh. This was the first instance of printing of scripture.

Giani Gian Singh summarises his view of Namdhari (Kuka) Sikhs in following verse.

They worship Bhavani,  
Recite Bani chant Waheguru over and over again,  
They are distinguished by their white dress, white woollen rosary,  
Straight turban and flowing beard.  
They perform Havan,  
Recite hymns from Guru-Granth.  
They are the **true followers of Guru Gobind Singh**,  
And cannot be diverted from their resolve to establish a  
government of their own.  
Such are impenetrable Kukas known for their worshipful ways.  
Gian Singh has narrated as he has witnessed them.

Sri Guru Panth Prakash

Satguru Ji was an ardent proponent of equality of genders. The society at that time was highly skewed against women. He preached against the social evils of child-marriage, bride buying, female infanticide, dowry etc. He promoted widow remarriage. He was the first to baptise women by administering Amrit to them on 1-June-1863 at village Siar. Couple of days later, He started the new *maryada* to perform marriage ceremony. The new *maryada* consisted of circumambulation around fire altar while *lavan*, hymns as written by Guru Ramdas Ji, are recited. The new *maryada* shed the truckload of unnecessary and complex rituals and broke the hegemony of Brahmin priests to perform marriages. As a result of all these reforms, the gender ratio in Namdhari Sikh's is 992, which is in stark contrast to that of 776 in Punjab state among 0-6yrs age group.

The efforts of Satguru Ram Singh Ji brought the Sikh panth from the profound depths towards the golden ascent. Giani Gian Singh narrates

Charged with this spectacular mission,

Ram Singh set about delivering discourses.  
He made people give up smoking and keep unshorn hair.  
Particularly fortunate were those who partook of the Nectar  
and entered the Sikh fold.

His fame spread apace.  
People in multitude became his disciples.

**Manifold grew the Khalsa.**

His disciples, **soaked in the bliss of Nam,**  
gave up opium, hashish, poppy,  
liquor and various other intoxicants.

They would not eat meat.

They would not steal.

They foreswore adultery and deception.

They practised saintliness.

**The Golden Age had returned.**

Sri Guru Panth Prakash